



NOTICE OF MEETING

EMERGENCY SERVICES SPECIAL COMMITTEE

I hereby give notice that an Ordinary Meeting of the Emergency Services Special Committee will be held on:-

DATE: **Tuesday, 2 December 2003** **TIME:** **9.30 am**

VENUE: **Civil Defence Headquarters, 7 Elcoat Avenue, Henderson, Waitakere City**

to consider the business as set out herein and to take any necessary action connected therewith.

26 November 2003

Sharon Simiona
COMMITTEE SECRETARY

Telephone (09) 836 8000 extn 8820

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillors	DQ	Battersby, JP (Chairperson)
	VS	Neeson, JP (Deputy Chairperson)
	RP	Dallow, QPM, JP
	AC	Fenton
	GW	Russell, JP

Mayor Bob Harvey, QSO, JP (ex officio)
Deputy Mayor Carolynne Stone (ex officio)

(Quorum 2 members)

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(The reports and recommendations contained in all agendas are reports and recommendations only and are not to be construed, in any way, as Council policy until adopted.)

WAITAKERE CITY COUNCIL



AGENDA FOR AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SPECIAL
COMMITTEE TO BE HELD IN THE CIVIL DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS,
7 ELCOAT AVENUE, HENDERSON, WAITAKERE CITY,
ON TUESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2003,
COMMENCING AT 9.30 AM.

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1 APOLOGIES



2 URGENT BUSINESS

Section 46A(7) and (7A) of the Local Government Official Information Act and Meetings Act 1987 provides that where an item of business is not on the agenda, it may only be dealt with at the meeting if:

- (i) the item is a minor matter; and
- (ii) the Chairperson has explained at the beginning of the meeting (when open to the public) that the item will be raised for discussion, why the item is not on the agenda, and why it cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting; and
- (iii) the Committee resolves to deal with the item.

No resolution, decision, or recommendation may be made in respect of the item except to refer the item to a subsequent meeting for further discussion.

NOTE: Urgent Business need not be dealt with now and may be delayed until later in the meeting.



3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Ordinary - Thursday, 11 September 2003

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Emergency Services Special Committee held on Thursday, 11 September 2003, as circulated, be taken as read and now be confirmed.



4 **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to give the Emergency Services Special Committee an overview of Civil Defence Emergency Management activity during the reporting period since the last meeting.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Civil Defence Emergency Management is a responsibility of the Council under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. Civil Defence forms a part of Council's strategic framework in that it contributes to community well being and building strong communities by increasing community readiness for and resilience to emergency events, reduces exposure to such events, and provides for emergency response in the case of such events. The basis for emergency management is found within the four R's namely Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery. These four requirements form the basis of all local Civil Defence Emergency Management tactical and operational planning.

ISSUES

Training

Since the last meeting, a series of Coordinated Incident Management Systems level two (CIMS2) courses have been conducted for Council staff as nominated in the Emergency Operating Centre activation lists plus representatives from stakeholder groups. Coordinated Incident Management Systems is the process that will be followed to manage any incident by the emergency services and also that which will be used in the Civil Defence Emergency Management Emergency Operating Centre (EOC) in the future. In addition to the level two training, all designated Controllers and senior Emergency Operating Centre staff will be required to complete the two-day Coordinated Incident Management Systems level four course during the forthcoming year. Both levels of training will become a mandatory requirement for Emergency Operating Centre staff in the future.

In addition to the Coordinated Incident Management Systems two training, Council staff have also participated in Emergency Operating Centre refresher training. Such ongoing training is essential in order that our response capability is maintained to an effective level as required by the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. It is the intention to exercise both Council staff and liaison organisations before the end of this financial year. A number of senior Emergency Operating Centre position holders will also be attending specialised courses for Controllers, Crisis Management and Decision Making, Public Information and disaster Recovery in the New Year.

Two more members of the volunteer Initial Response Unit have qualified for their Urban Search and Rescue Category one Orange Card being the culmination of a year's successful training. Two other members were to have also qualified but had to opt out of the final training course requirement due to work requirements. This now brings the number of Orange Card qualified volunteers to 13. In addition, all Initial Response Unit volunteers have undertaken additional New Zealand Qualification Association training in welfare and Emergency Operating Centre operating procedures and a further five team members have also qualified as rope rescue responders as a specialist element within the overall team framework.

At the meeting of 11 September 2003, the Committee endorsed the recommendation for the volunteer Initial Response Unit to seek registration as a recognised National Response Team being the culmination of the training strategy that has been conducted over the last two years. It is a privilege to report that following an audit process conducted over the last two months, and a moderation process being undertaken in early December, the team will be officially registered as National Response Team 3 and in so doing becoming the first such team in the Auckland Region.

The Latter Day Saints welfare supervisors have also conducted three training sessions for welfare centre volunteers during the reporting period.

Considerable other training for rural fire volunteers has also been conducted during the reporting period and is reported on in a separate paper by the Principal Rural Fire Officer.

Welfare Standing Operating Procedure

It is pleasing to report that the Welfare Standing Operating Procedure document is now completed and is in the process of distribution. Copies of the Standing Operating Procedure will be available for perusal at this meeting. This document will significantly enhance not only ours but also the emergency services and welfare response stakeholders ability to respond to any evacuation procedure throughout the City. This is a significant achievement and is the result of several months of application by our Emergency Management Officer. Although our current Interim Civil Defence Plan has a Welfare section, it is essentially an overview only and does not have any particular operational substance. The new Standing Operating Procedure has been developed with the requirements of new legislation and the pending Group Plan in mind and our own future development. It is the intention to exercise the Standing Operating Procedure in the new year and to amend it as may be required accordingly.

Perhaps the most significant introduction in the Standing Operating Procedure is that all primary schools have been identified as evacuation assembly points for use by ourselves and the emergency services as may be required in any major evacuation incident. In due course appropriate signs will be placed on all primary schools as an initial step for public education. The benefit of introducing this procedure is that it will allow a breathing space to occur should there become a need to open a dedicated welfare centre for the displaced persons. It will also allow the public to be centralised for any transportation requirements.

A presentation on the Standing Operating Procedure will be made at the meeting.

Emergency Operating Centre

All desk files for the Emergency Operating Centre, communications and Liaison staff have been updated as has been the Emergency Operating Centre activation list. Further development in the New Year will see a review of Emergency Operating Centre staffing requirements and the interrelationship of the designated Crisis Management Team.

By the time of this meeting, our Emergency Operating Centre will have undergone a capability and vulnerability assessment as required for the four designated Emergency Operating Centre's as identified in the draft Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan. A particular element of this audit will be to determine our ability to function as a Group Emergency Operating Centre should the demand arise. As previously reported it is quite likely our Emergency Operating Centre will fall short of meeting this requirement purely because of its physical size constraints as opposed to operational capability. A benefit of the assessment will be to highlight shortfalls for normal operations that may be identified as a specific requirement across the region.

Professional Development

During the reporting period, the Manager: Emergency Management has gained the National Certificate in Civil Defence Response which is believed to be a first within the Emergency Management sector in the Auckland Region. Additional qualification has also been gained as a workplace assessor with both the Local Government and Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Organisations.

Given the level of work in gaining New Zealand Qualification Association qualifications carried out within Waitakere City Civil Defence Emergency Management over the last two years, your Manager has also been invited to become a member of the Local Government Industry Training Organisation advisory group for the development of Civil Defence Emergency Management New Zealand Qualification Association Unit Standards. Additionally, and as a result of the success gained by our volunteer Response Team, the Manager: Emergency Management has also been invited to become a member of the National Response Project Working Group for the development of community response and rescue, namely Project Rapid. The aim of Project Rapid is to enhance the number of community response groups for emergency response. Given the achievements of our volunteer response unit, it is likely that our council will be earmarked for a pilot study in this regard and receive central government funding for local development purposes.

RESOURCES

There are no resource issues for the reporting period.

CONCLUSION

The current reporting period has seen considerable achievement in terms of ensuring our level of response capability is maintained to an effective level as required by the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. The year overall has been one of consolidation and development particularly to better position ourselves for the introduction of the Group Plan mid 2004. Civil Defence Emergency Management is very much in a transitional phase and the gradual implementation of Group Plan requirements will significantly influence our organisation over the next twelve months. In the meantime, it is considered that our Civil Defence Emergency Management and Rural Fire organisation is in a sound position for local emergency management and rural fire response capability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the information be received.

Report prepared by: Bill Morley, Manager: Emergency Management.



5 AUCKLAND CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DRAFT GROUP PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to enable the Emergency Services Special Committee to consider and comment on:

1. the progress being made on the development of the draft Group Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan as required by the provisions of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002; and
2. make recommendations for any amendment or alteration to the current Plan as considered necessary.

BACKGROUND

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 requires the formation of a Regional Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (hereinafter CDEMG) and the formulation of a Group Plan for Civil Defence Emergency Management purposes. As required by legislation, the Group Plan is to be approved within a 2-year deadline after Group formation. The deadline for the Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan approval by the Minister is August 2004.

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has the principal responsibility for civil defence emergency management planning and activity within each region, including the management of hazards and risks in the region, and either undertaking reduction, readiness, response and recovery activities, or ensuring they are undertaken, to an effective standard. Each territorial authority, however, remains responsible for its own emergency management measures under the Act, the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan or as otherwise agreed by the Group.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Civil Defence Emergency Management is a function which local authorities are statutorily required to undertake. Civil Defence Emergency Management measures contribute to community well being by reducing the risk and likely impact of disasters and emergency events, building community resilience to the impacts of such events. Given the interconnected urban nature of the Auckland Region, there are strong reasons for a regional approach to civil defence emergency management through the requirement of a dedicated Group Plan.

ISSUES

A1-A5

A report on progress with the Plan, which went to the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group, as attached at pages A1 to A5. It is intended that a member of the team working on the Plan will be present to give an update report.

Although territorial authorities may give input and make recommendations in the development of the Group Plan, the ultimate decision to notify the Plan to the Minister for approval rests with the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group. Councillor Battersby is the Waitakere City Council Representative on the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group. The Plan is being prepared through the Co-ordinating Executive Group, at which the Director: Corporate and Civic Services represents Council.

As can be seen at the attachment, considerable progress has been made in the development of the Plan however there are some risks to the timeline requirements, which could affect the Plans final approval. The following issues are particularly relevant.

Primary Risks

a. Cost Apportionment

Although there has been an agreed cost apportionment for Group activities for this financial year, no agreement has been able to be reached for ongoing apportionment.

The Act requires *"for the apportionment between local authorities of liability for the provision of financial and other resources for the activities of the Group, and the basis for that apportionment"*.

While there has been considerable effort taking place particularly at the CEO Forum level to rectify this current impasse, should it not be resolved by the Plan notification timeline, it is unlikely that the plan will be approved. A subsequent report on the agenda addresses this issue.

b. Group Controller Appointment

There is currently no agreement on the appointment of a Group Controller as required under the Act and as a requirement for approval of the plan. A working group comprising Craig Shearer (Auckland Regional Council), Ross McLeod and David Neil (New Zealand Fire Service) has been established to further develop the roles and scope of the Group Controllers responsibilities. A favoured option as recommended by the Coordinating Executive Group (CEG) is for the employment of the Group controller on the basis of 10 -15 hours per week. The process for the appointment is commencing through the regional Emergency Management Office.

RESOURCES

To assist the Plan development and the ultimate achievement of stated goals and objectives, personnel resources from all Group member organisations are involved in a variety of working groups and committees to further this requirement.

CONCLUSION

Although considerable progress has been made towards the completion of the Plan, final approval will be dependant upon the issues noted in this report and associated attachment being resolved.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the information be received.

Report prepared by: Bill Morley, Manager: Emergency Management.



6 AUCKLAND REGIONAL CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP - REVIEW

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present to the Emergency Services Special Committee a review of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group arrangements, as requested at the December 2002 meeting.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 3 December 2002, the Emergency Services Special Committee resolved:

“That a review of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Work Programme and Budget be undertaken in nine months with a report back to the Emergency Services Special Committee in twelve months to monitor the financial impact of the new process, the emphasis of the review being on both locally and regionally.”

3406/2002

A6-A14

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Annual Report for 2002/2003 was presented to the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Committee on 17 October 2003. A copy of the report is attached at pages A6 to A14. The Group has been formally established in seven months.

The Work Programme for both 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 was based upon the Draft Group Plan that was developed in advance of legislative requirements, as well as the statutory provisions of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. The focus of the Work Programme for both years was to ensure that the Auckland region could continue its progress towards a resilient Auckland, which was able to react to and recover readily from any disaster or emergency event.

Given the time for which the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group arrangements have been in place (formally established in May 2003), this review can only really be superficial in nature. However, there are a number of preliminary views that can be formed on progress to date, and areas for particular focus in future reviews can be determined.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Civil Defence Emergency Management contributes to the Council's strategic goals by contributing to community well being through reducing the risk and likely impact of any disaster or major emergency event that may impact upon the community. The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 specifies a regional approach be undertaken towards emergency management, compelling Councils to establish joint Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups. The Auckland region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has been formed as a result of the legislation, and as a joint committee between the Auckland Regional Council and the seven Territorial Authorities in the Auckland Region.

ISSUES

Legislative Requirements

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Group is working steadily towards fulfilling its legislative requirements in terms of having a group plan and associated operational arrangements in place. A great deal of work on the group plan was done in advance of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 coming into effect, particularly in the strategic and work programme areas.

The 2003/2004 Work Programme is designed to continue development and completion of the plan and put in place a number of the operational and administrative arrangements around it.

The results in this area can be viewed as reasonably positive. Work on establishing the plan is progressing and the parties involved in Civil Defence Emergency Management are working together reasonably well. Given the fact that not much time under the current arrangements has lapsed and that the plan and associated operational arrangements are yet to take effect (the arrangement under the Civil Defence Act 1983 remain in existence until a group plan is adopted), it is too early to tell finally whether Waitakere's interests are being served the same, better or worse than under the former arrangements. Further reviews in subsequent years will enable a better view to be formed in this regard.

Funding Issues

As highlighted in another report on the agenda, funding allocation issues remain likely to be the point of contention and possibly disruption in respect of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group. The Regional Funding Working Group established by the Chief Executives Forum has devised a funding formula for Civil Defence Emergency Management Group that aligns with this Council's position of 50% funding from the regional rate and 50% funding from the Territorial Authorities, divided on a population basis.

At this stage the Auckland Regional Council disagrees with this formula, and seems to be inflexible on shifting their position on funding, which is that they pay only 16% of costs.

The Committee is well aware of the background to this issue and it is reported elsewhere in the Agenda. However, if this issue cannot be resolved, it does call into question the viability of the regional approach signalled in the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. This will be an area that the Council will need to watch closely, and if agreement can't be reached, it may be necessary to ask the Minister to review the legislation or compel the Auckland Regional Council to move from their entrenched position.

Work Programme

In terms of the 2003/2004 Work Programme, the Coordinating Executive Group is coming to the view that some adjustment may be required. Parts of the Work Programme appear to be quite ambitious now that full scoping is occurring, and might need some scaling back given the resources provided, while some realignment in terms of the plan and Work Programme targets is likely to be necessary in light of the release of the national strategy.

This is not a major issue and some of this realignment work will be an ongoing process over a five year period. Further reporting on this issue will be made as work on finalising and implementing the plan continues.

RESOURCES

There are no further resources other than staff time budgeted in the 2003/2004 Annual Plan required in respect of this report.

CONCLUSION

The Emergency Services Special Committee requested a review of the regional Civil Defence Emergency Management Group arrangements. This report presents a preliminary review, given that the Group has only been formally established since May 2003 and that the Group Plan is yet to be fully adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the information be received.
2. That a further review of Auckland Regional Civil Defence Emergency Management Group arrangements be conducted and reported back to the Committee in 12 months time.

Report prepared by: Bill Morley, Manager: Emergency Management and Ross McLeod, Director: Corporate & Civic Services.



7 **AUCKLAND REGION CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP - FUNDING ISSUES**

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the Emergency Services Special Committee on the process to resolve funding allocation issues associated with the Auckland Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group.

BACKGROUND

The Committee will be aware that the issue of funding apportionment associated with the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has yet to be agreed between the member of Councils. The Regional Civil Defence Emergency Management function was formally totally funded by the Auckland Regional Council. With the advent of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and its provision for joint committees to operate as Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups, the Auckland Regional Council decided it would reduce its funding from 100% of the total required to 16%. The Auckland Regional Council made it clear that this decision was solely based on the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group being a joint committee rather than a committee of the Auckland Regional Council, and has stated that it would have fully funded the activity had the Committee of the Auckland Regional Council structure been adopted in the Act.

This led to a major impasse for the 2002/2003 financial year. This was eventually resolved by the parties agreeing for one year only, to a formula put forward by the Auckland Regional Council, which saw them funding 16% of costs, and the Territorial Authorities apportioning costs between them on a population basis. The Territorial Authorities agreed to this for one year only on the basis that a review would be carried out by a Regional Funding Policy Working Group established under the auspices of the Chief Executives Forum.

A15-A32

The working group established by the Chief Executives Forum meet through the year, and established a set of principles relating to regional funding as well as providing specific cost allocations across a range of services and activities, including Civil Defence Emergency Management. A copy of the summary report of the Group and the detailed report relating to Civil Defence Emergency Management, as attached at pages A15 to A32.

In relation to Civil Defence Emergency Management, the Working Group found that the costs should be apportioned 50% to the Auckland Regional Council and 50% among the Territorial Authorities on a population basis. Only the Auckland Regional Council member on the group dissented in respect of this finding.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Civil Defence Emergency Management is a function which Local Authorities are statutorily required to undertake. Civil Defence Emergency Management measures contribute to community well-being by reducing the risk and likely impact of disasters and emergency events and building community resilience to the impact of such events. Given the interconnected urban nature of the Auckland Region, there are strong reasons for a regional approach to Civil Defence Emergency Management. The Civil Defence Emergency Management Group is the co-ordinating body required to be established under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002.

ISSUES

The original funding project report has now been considered by the Finance and Operational Performance Committee. The Committee resolved:

- “1. That the recommendations and report of the Regional Funding Working Group established by the Chief Executives Forum be endorsed and used as a basis for Council budgeting.
2. That the issue of reaching agreement in relation to the funding of Civil Defence Emergency Management be referred to the Emergency Services Special Committee.
3. That the report of the Regional Funding Working Group be referred to the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group.”

4092/2003

Staff are not aware, as yet, what all of the other Councils have resolved as a result of the report, however, the Auckland Regional Council has rejected the funding apportionment set out. This seems an inflexible approach. The Committee may recall that when the regional funding work was commissioned, the impasse that had been reached was that the Auckland Regional Council would only agree to pay 16% of the funding costs, while the Auckland City Council wanted the Auckland Regional Council to pay 100% of the funding costs. Certainly at an officer level, the Auckland City Council has shifted their position, and agrees now with the recommendations of the Regional Funding Group. An update will be provided at the meeting as to what the political position is. The Auckland City Council has therefore shifted quite significantly in relation to the issue, while the Auckland Regional Council remains steadfastly attached to a position that could derail the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group process in the Auckland region.

In order to find a way forward, it is recommended that the Chairperson of the Emergency Services Special Committee, supported by appropriate staff, take action with the parties involved to seek a way forward on this issue. The parties that will need to be involved in this process are the other members of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group and the Minister and Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management.

RESOURCING

There are no additional resources required in respect of this issue.

CONCLUSION

The work commissioned by the Chief Executives Forum on Regional Funding has now been completed. The Group has come up with a funding apportionment formula which aligns with this Council's position. However, an impasse still exists in that the Auckland Regional Council will not adopt the formula. It is appropriate that the Chairperson be authorised to take action to try and get some agreement around this issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the information be received.
2. That the Chairperson of the Emergency Services Special Committee, supported by appropriate staff, take all appropriate action necessary to resolve the impasse relating to regional funding of the Civil Defence Emergency Management activity, in line with the project report provided by the Regional Funding Working Party.

Report prepared by: Ross McLeod, Director: Corporate & Civic Services.



8 **HALF-YEARLY RURAL FIRE REPORT**

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the activities carried out over the past six months in Council's role as the Waitakere Rural Fire Authority and to update the Emergency Services Special Committee on significant issues.

BACKGROUND

Under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977 Waitakere City Council is constituted as the Rural Fire Authority responsible for fire prevention and control in the rural area of the City and has responsibilities which include:

- a. Fire preparedness, fire prevention, fire suppression and the necessary training and equipping of the volunteer rural fire forces in order that they can carry out these roles.
- b. Producing an annual Rural Fire Plan.
- c. Authorising and monitoring Open, Restricted and Prohibited fire seasons for the Waitakere Rural Fire District.
- d. Meeting the requirements of the National Rural Fire Code of Management Practice for Councils rural fire risk factor.

By contractual arrangements, and through the services of the Principal Rural Fire Officer, the Waitakere City Council provides the same services to the Rodney District Council (currently under review) and the North Shore City Council. Oversight of all services rests with the Manager Emergency Management.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Rural fire contributes to the Councils desired outcomes in the area of public safety and environment protection. This Council plays a major part in fire prevention and suppression by funding local volunteer rural fire forces, and by providing a widespread network of emergency water tanks in the rural fire area.

ISSUES

Contract of Service with the Rodney District Council

Rodney District Council have expressed their intent to vary the conditions of the existing Contract of Service from 30 November 2003. The proposed requirements have not been made clear, with a number of proposals being put. To bring some clarity to the situation, Waitakere City Council has written to the Rodney District Council advising that we require a clear proposal in writing, to consider prior to 30 November 2003, or, that after that date the Contract of Service will be considered completed.

It would appear that changes to the Emergency Management structure within the Rodney Council have instigated this proposed change.

The Contract of Service has brought considerable benefit to both Councils and has allowed significant improvements to be made, particularly in the area of staff training. Joint purchasing power has allowed major cost saving to be made with the rationalisation of equipment. The lapse of the Contract would be considered a backward step, especially for the Rodney District Council, whose rural fire interests have gained significantly. The results of the work to continue some form of contract will be updated at the meeting.

National Rural Fire Authority

The Waitakere Rural Fire Authority will be the subject of a Rural Fire Management, Code of Practice Audit in mid December 2003.

This will be the first Audit to be carried out under the revised requirements of the Code of Practice and will be the first to include the NZQA skill requirements for all staff. The audit is expected to be very comprehensive and will test our systems and preparedness levels fully. Waitakere has all systems and requirements in place, and should meet the levels demanded.

Training

A high activity level of training has been carried out over the past six months, which has called for a considerable commitment of time and activity from our rural volunteers. All of our volunteer personnel have now gained at least seven NZQA unit standards each, a very commendable achievement on their part. This is in addition to their usual weekly maintenance training. Under the contractual agreement the volunteer staff of Rodney Council have gained the same levels of training.

Changes to the Code of Practice have included the requirement that from 1 September 2003 this year all personnel attending a vegetation fire-ground must hold NZQA, unit standard 3285, "Protect personal safety at vegetation fires". This applies not only to our Rural Fire Officers, but also to New Zealand Fire Service crews who may attend. Training to the compliance levels has been provided to the Auckland Fire Service crews, as well as to all of those Fire Service volunteer brigades who may be called on to respond into the Waitakere or Rodney Rural Districts.

Changes to Fire Service policies have resulted in the closing of their specialist Training Centres to Rural Fire Officers. The ability to access this resource for specialist training is essential to the safety of our crews. Negotiations with the Fire Service Commission, for access to this type of training on a region wide basis are continuing and it is hoped that a positive result will be forthcoming.

Waitakere has an advantage, in that following the training of Fire Service staff by Waitakere; we can expect at least three courses for our own Rural Fire Officers in return.

Courses held

NZQA No	Course Name	Courses Held
17279	C.I.M.S. 2	13
3287	Use water & additives	8
3286	Dry fire- fighting	8
4573	Two way radio	11
3270	Establish & deliver water	9
3285	Protect personal safety	12
14564	Effects of environment	2
4647	Fire Science	10

An additional 31 courses were held for New Zealand Fire Service staff, instructing on Protecting Personal Safety to enable their crews to attend at vegetation fires

RESOURCES

Equipment and appliance levels are satisfactory. The upgrading of the Arataki appliance in service with our Arataki unit has been completed, with the appliance now fully operational. An exchange of the portable pump to one of higher volume on the Bethells Tanker has improved the filling rate of the unit, which should now provide an improved turn-around at fires. General equipment and hose stocks are adequate for the on-coming fire season. The level two protective clothing has been ordered and it is expected to begin issuing it to staff prior to Christmas, this will provide a well overdue level of protection for our staff.

The amendments to the Health & Safety in Employment Act have impacted on the general working conditions of our volunteers. Council's Health and Safety staff have subjected all stations to an audit. Defects identified through this process are being programmed for rectification.

Staffing

In terms of staffing levels, staff retention with the Karekare Volunteer Rural Fire Force is not a problem historically, they have always maintained a stable crew. Waitakere has had an input of recruits who appear to be more than suitable in that they have accepted the requirement for training with commitment. Bethells crew levels are slightly down; again, with a number of new recruits the workload for the existing members in bringing the new chums up to speed is appreciated.

During this period we have lost a very committed fire-fighter in Senior Fire Fighter Terry Beynon to cancer. As a very active member of the Waitakere Volunteer Rural Fire Force. Terry will be missed.

Of concern was an incident where a fire-fighter was contaminated with blood while attending a motor vehicle accident. The medical gloves he was wearing became damaged and the patient's blood contacted an existing cut he had on his own hand. The person he was treating was later found to be suffering from H.I.V. Specialist medical advice was sought, and to-date he has had no ill effects.

As can be seen from the training record shown above, the commitment demonstrated by our volunteers is quite amazing. Waitakere is fortunate to have their services, and should be proud to have citizens such as these within its boundaries.

Responses

In general no major fires have occurred during the winter months, although the Waitakere Rural Fire Force as the first arriving unit successfully held a potentially very destructive factory fire. The factory on Waitakere Road was well alight on arrival. Crews from Waitakere managed to gain entry and hold the fire to a small section of the building. A scrub fire at Anawhata started by fireworks caused some concern. Even at this early time of the fire season the dryness of the coastal vegetation, as evidenced by the rate of fire spread was surprising. With three years of warm winters and damp summers the growth rate of vegetation has resulted in a heavy fuel loading throughout the District, bringing the potential for very hot and fast moving fires this summer.

Waitakere Rural Fire Authority	No. of Calls	Rodney District Council	No. of Rural Fire Calls
P.F.A.	1	P.M.F.A	2
Vehicle Fires	5	Vehicle Fires	13
Structures	3	Structures	4
M.V.A.	2	Rescues	5
Rescues	3	F.A.	4
F.A.	3	Vegetation	7
Bonfires	1	Power Lines	5
Vegetation	5	Rubbish	2
		Bonfires	2
		Assist Public	1
Total	23	Total	45

CONCLUSION

Although operationally quiet, a high level of activity has been maintained throughout this period. Winter's preparations should ensure that the Waitakere Rural Fire District is ready for the on-coming fire season. Morale is excellent, equipment levels are adequate, pre-planning and co-operation with the New Zealand Fire Service is well in hand.

The New Year should see the beginning of specialist breathing apparatus training in preparation for the commissioning of sets. On-going discussions with the New Zealand Fire Service will hopefully open further training opportunities for our crews.

Appreciation must be shown to our volunteer Rural Fire Officers. Their on-going commitment to the protection of the community is an example to us all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the information be received.
2. That the volunteers of the City's Rural Fire Forces be commended for their contribution to the safety and environment of Waitakere City.

Report prepared by: Peter Barber, Principal Rural Fire Officer.

